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SUPPLEMENT TO  
REPORT NO.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

PROSECUTION OF ALLEGED COAL-MINE SABOTEURS AT OSTRAVA

The prosecution claimed that this group had caused serious mining accidents which cost lives and millions of crowns' worth of damage through criminal negligence. Documentary as well as eyewitness testimony was presented by the prosecution. The indictments, which were read in the first day of the hearing, singled out three of the defendants as the main criminals. These were Engineers Zalud, Harel, and Pavlu.

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Zalud, as the chairman of the Regional Mining Office, practiced continuing sabotage. One of his most important tasks was the supervision of safety measures in the various mines under his jurisdiction. He consistently violated safety regulations, held up the flow of reports from enterprise administrations and neglected to see that known dangers were removed. In one instance, when he was well aware of the dangerous nature of working conditions in the Hubert pit of the Dombrowa mine, he gave permission to resume operations in this pit, after consultations with defendants Karel and Pavlu. Consequently, there was an explosion in this shaft on 12 February 1952, which cost the death of some miners. A part of the mine containing large quantities of coal was demolished and rendered inoperable for a considerable time.

The accused, in his capacity as chairman of the Regional Mining Office, conducted an investigation of the causes of the explosion in such a way that those who were actually to blame were not punished. Other members of this gang of saboteurs were Karel, Pavlu, Polak, Carbol, and Golka, who, with the full knowledge of Zalud, falsified books and entries reporting the existence of methane gas and thus clearly tried to hide the evidence of their own guilt in the disaster.

Zalud attempted to proceed in this manner in other cases also. He is responsible for causing the conditions in the Barbora mine which led to the destructive fire there on 17 December 1951. In this incident his main accomplices were Alfons Petras and Emerich Lazarsky, who were both criminally negligent in carrying out their duties and were very irresponsible.

In one of the shafts of the Barbora mine there was a considerable odor, which is noticed as a rule when a fire is imminent. In order to avoid a pit fire, Zalud decided that the particular section was to be walled in. Although he was aware of the danger, he failed to set a time limit for the execution of this safety measure. He tried to assure the leading workers of the mine that the danger was not acute. This is why the defendant Petras merely issued the order for the building of the wall and did not follow up on its execution, as was his duty.

Similarly, Stoszek, the chief of the ventilation service in the Barbora mine, was negligent when he refused to test the air in the danger area, and after the fire had started, he criminally took his time in detecting the center of the blaze. Stoszek failed to inform the management of the mine and the commission of the Mining Office of the condition in the danger zone and thus was guilty of causing the blaze to spread so that it got out of control.

Following the reading of the above indictments, several of the defendants were cross-examined by the prosecution. Others will be heard on Friday, 11 July 1952. During the cross-examination, the prosecution was successful in proving some of the finer points of the indictments, which should lead to the definite conviction of the defendants. Some confessions were obtained.

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